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RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1607  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2371  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1639  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 2467  
RUEHBD/AMCONSUL PERTH 0607  
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
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SUBJECT: INDONESIA LOOKS AT POST-ELECTION TIES WITH U.S.

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

¶1. (U) This message was coordinated with Consulate General Surabaya.

¶2. (C) SUMMARY: The Policy Planning Office of the Indonesian Department of Foreign Affairs (DEPLU) held a retreat in Bali, February 27-28. Pol/C participated in the conference which focused on prospects for U.S.-Indonesian ties after the U.S. elections (DEPLU is preparing an analytical piece for President Yudhoyono on this subject.) While expressing some concerns, participants agreed that Indonesia's ties with the U.S. were strong and the momentum would continue no matter who won in November. GOI policy planners requested continued dialogue with the USG on international issues. END SUMMARY.

#### PLANNING MEETING

¶3. (C) DEPLU's Policy Planning Office--which goes by the acronym "BPPK"--held a retreat in Sanur, Bali, February 27-28. Pol/C and Pol FSN--who were the only outsiders present--participated in the conference, which focused on prospects for U.S.-Indonesian relations in the post-U.S. election timeframe. Ambassador Artaul Tobing, the head of BPPK, told Pol/C that the retreat would help inform a report on Indonesian relations with the U.S. meant for President Yudhoyono's review.

¶4. (U) Roughly 60 Indonesian officials, think-tankers and academics participated in the meeting. The officials came mainly from DEPLU, the Defense Ministry, the Coordinating Ministry for Politics, Security and Legal Affairs, and the Indonesian legislature (DPR). Academics hailed from the University of Indonesia in Jakarta and several other universities, including in Bali. Representatives from well-known Indonesian public policy institutes such as the Center for Strategy and International Studies (CSIS) and the Center for National Strategy Studies also participated.

#### EXAMINING THE POST-ELECTION SITUATION

¶5. (C) Ambassador Eddy Hariyadhi, DEPLU's Director General for America and Europe, kicked off the meeting. Hariyadhi noted how important the U.S. was in the world and in Asia, stressing that Indonesia had to find ways to continue the positive momentum in the relationship no matter what happened

in November. He expected, however, that the U.S. would be increasingly wrapped up in the electoral process as November approached and this fact might effect its focus on international issues. Hariyadhi noted that Indonesia itself had presidential and legislative elections in 2009, which would no doubt impact its own focus on regional and international matters.

¶6. (C) Several speakers expressed some concerns about post-election ties. The concerns were not so much about Indonesia and the U.S. per se, but about the international climate more broadly or the U.S. economy. Alfian Muthalib of the Center for National Security Studies said he expected the "U.S. to continue to be preoccupied with Iraq and Afghanistan." Ronny Bishry of the University of Indonesia underscored that the U.S. was entering a problematic period economically and Indonesia had to monitor that. The mortgage crisis, the fall of the dollar, the trade deficit and the low savings rate all were "destabilizing" for the international economic situation. Since Indonesia could not effect that dynamic much, it had to move quickly to address potential impacts.

¶7. (C) Interlocutors expressed concern that if a Republican won there might be too much focus on unilateral solutions to complex international problems. At the same time, interlocutors noted that a Democratic administration might make human rights such a high priority that Indonesia would be punished for events that happened many years ago. Indonesian participants spoke with special pride about Senator Barack Obama, who lived in Indonesia as a boy.

UNDERLINING CONSTANCY IN TIES

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¶8. (C) In his brief remarks to the group, Pol/C underlined that--no matter what happened in November--relations would remain stable and positive. Pol/C briefly sketched out the flow of relations since 1949--when Indonesia attained its independence--noting that each U.S. administration placed a priority on Indonesia. Indonesia was simply too big a country to overlook and--across the political spectrum--Americans understood that it was a key democratic country in Asia and a lynchpin in Southeast Asia. President Bush had made this clear during his 2006 visit to Indonesia. Whomever won in November was unlikely to deviate from this clear, successful path. The Indonesians in the room accepted Pol/C's basic premise. They added this caveat, however: the USG seemed to have some major problems on its plate that seemed to preclude a very strong focus on Southeast Asia.

HOPE FOR CONTINUED DIALOGUE

¶9. (C) Ambassador Tobing told Pol/C that she hoped that her office could continue the dialogue with the USG. She noted that the BPPK had held some meetings with S/P in the past. She hoped that BPPK could develop additional linkages with INR and other USG analytical agencies. Pol/C replied that we welcomed that and would make sure that appropriate USG visitors to Jakarta held meetings with her office.

HUME